MAKE US WHOLE

When I cannot find the words to say what I would say,
When my own thoughts elude me and I find no prayer to pray,
When I would grasp what can't be grasped and force it on a page,
The play moves on but I alone stand still upon the stage;

Still, because I cannot speak the words that you should hear,
Still, because I cannot grasp what you mean to me, my dear–
Still, because the world moves on and nothing stays the same,
Still, because the rules may change but will never change the game.

I think back on all I've done and all that I have seen,
Lighting candles for lost lovers, and those lost in between,
And incense for the silences, and in those silent hours–
The revenants surround me like the scent of ancient flowers

Because I reach out to touch you, and I cannot feel your skin;
Because whisper to the darkness and your name lost therein.
Because distant stars don't hear or care, whatever wish is made,
Because my heart, that would have left and I who would have stayed.

Still, I reach out to touch you, and caress the empty air
I strain my ears to hear your voice, when there is nothing there.
My aching heart calls out to you, knowing you won't hear–
Make us whole, the flesh calls out, my darling and my dear.

We are broken, and we wander, under strange and distant stars
We are riven of self and soul, and eyes cannot see the scars;
We players on the stage of life, bereft of script or aid–
We go on, the play goes on– together, what have we made?

Together, what is it we've made? Together, or shall we part?
Together, does that make us whole? Is it the end or start?
Candles glow in warmth and silence, incense drifts like ghosts
And still the words desert me, when I need them the most.

I will not desert you, as my words deserted me.
I will be yours to hold, to talk or touch or see
I will not deny you, and I doubt now that I can;
I will catch you if you fall, and I will help you stand.

Still, I stand, upon the stage, the players all about–
I stand, but still, not one of them– I stand and I reach out
I pray –if I could pray– that you will take my hand
And to feel your arms around me, beyond any hope or plan.

The candles are all out now, the incense ash and dust;
The ghosts cannot be banished, but we all do what we must.
The words that I knew all along, and feared to think or say,
The words that in my mind and heart are safely locked away,

Replaced by nameless longing, desired undefined,
Prayers that go unanswered, days that are unkind,
Unknowing and uncertainty, that weighten down the soul
And lastly, now and softly, the whisper 'Make us whole.'

Robert Eric Atkinson
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